UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/1998/7
E/CN.4/Sub.2/1997/44
19 August 1997

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifty-fourth session
Item 4 of the provisional agenda
Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities
Forty-ninth session
Agenda item 2

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES, INCLUDING PALESTINE

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, INCLUDING POLICIES OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND SEGREGATION AND OF APARTHEID, IN ALL COUNTRIES, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES: REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMISSION UNDER COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION 8 (XXIII)

Letter dated 14 August 1997 from the Permanent Observer for Palestine to the United Nations Office at Geneva, addressed to the Officer-in-Charge, High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights

The Israeli occupation authorities are committing new crimes of genocide against the Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as well as in the regions under the Authority of Palestinian Self-Government.

According to article II (c) of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, "deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part" constitutes the crime of genocide; therefore, the dangerous coercive and arbitrary measures taken by Israel had subjected, and still are subjecting, the Palestinian people in the Occupied Territory and in the regions of the Palestinian National Authority to starvation, sickness and utter destruction, by forbidding them access to food and medicine. These measures are represented as follows:

1. Closing international crossing points towards Egypt and Jordan.

2. Closing the cities and villages in the West Bank and isolating them from each other.

3. Isolating the West Bank from the Gaza Strip, and forbidding any kind of communication between them.

4. Stopping the transfer of the funds of the Palestinian Authority (funds raised from taxes and other dues).

5. Total interdiction of the movement of goods between the cities of the West Bank and between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, as well as the movement between the two and Israel, Egypt and Jordan.

6. Forbidding the movement of ambulances and the transport of sick persons and stopping the vaccination campaigns.

7. Closing the sea in Gaza to Palestinian fishermen.

8. Demolishing Palestinian houses, as the Israeli authorities demolished on Wednesday, 13 August 1997, five houses in the Camp of Shoufat, which is part of occupied East Jerusalem. The same authorities had already demolished 80 houses this year in the city of occupied East Jerusalem, in the context of a decision taken by the Israeli Government to demolish 500 other Palestinian houses.

These acts fall under the aforementioned article of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Furthermore, the demolition of the Palestinian houses in the territory occupied by Israel constitutes a flagrant violation of the principles of international law and the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949.

I hereby kindly request you to consider this memorandum as an official document and to distribute it as such to the distinguished members of the forty-ninth session of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities currently being held in Geneva, as well as to the members of the upcoming fifty-fourth session of the Commission on Human Rights.

(Signed) Nabil Ramlawi
Ambassador
Permanent Observer